

# Foster Parents

## Changing Lives One Child at a Time

March 2006



One generation plants the tree;  
Another gets the shade.  
– Chinese proverb

**For all caregivers who daily plant the trees, we say thank you.**

### Educational Advocacy Services for Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Care

Good News! Caregivers have a new resource to assist them in helping the children in their care achieve better educational outcomes. DSHS has launched a groundbreaking new Educational Advocacy Program to assist children and youth who have unmet educational needs. As of February 3, 2006, contracted Education Advocacy (EA) Coordinators are available in all Regions. Each Region has either one full-time or two part-time EA Coordinator(s). The role of the EA Coordinators is to provide advocacy interventions for eligible children and youth. In addition to direct advocacy, the EA Coordinators will also provide training to social workers, caregivers and community providers on specific topics such as special education, the McKinney Vento Act, and school discipline. To find out more information visit the CA web site, foster parent's page at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/index.asp>. If you have questions regarding the Education Advocacy Program, please feel free to contact the Education Program Manager at DSHS CA Outcomes@dshs.wa.gov

### Collaboration Produces Results

January was National Mentoring Month. Twenty-four Southwestern Washington adults who donated time to mentor foster children over the past year were recognized by DSHS on Thursday Jan. 26, at the Community Services Office in Tumwater. The event also honored the children in foster care who worked with the adult mentors, as well as the Foster Care Mentoring Coalition that sponsors the program.

Lt. Gov. Brad Owen and DSHS Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams welcomed and congratulated the mentoring pairs on their achievements. Lt. Gov. Owen and other DSHS staff also participated in a program at the State Capitol that saluted participants in a variety of mentoring groups.

"Often all it takes is a good mentor to help guide them". "What these groups are doing for others and for the community can be described as no less than magnificent," Owen said. "Today's youth have to sort through a maze of temptations, distractions and misdirection. Often all it takes is a good mentor to help guide them down the right path."

### Take Care of You

One of the challenges for many caregivers is to maintain their own health while taking care of children. Not only do caregivers need to get to the doctor for a checkup, but they also need to eat right and get enough sleep, exercise, and take time to relax. It is difficult to make time for these things if you have a two-year-old in the house or if you are working full time and trying to get the kids to sports or recreational events. Remember, your family is depending on you to take care of yourself so you can continue to take care of them! Dr. Jeffery Thompson, the Chief Medical Officer for Washington State's Medicaid program, recommends these healthy habits:

- **Eat sensibly** – remember to count calories and eat healthy foods,
- **Exercise** – 30 minutes of brisk walking or its equivalent three times a week, and
- **Drink plenty of water** – drink enough to keep your urine clear.

### 2006 Annual Caregiver Conference

The 2006 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference is scheduled for September 17, 18 and 19 in Spokane. We want your input. Are there specific topics you would like to hear about? Do you have suggestions for activities? If you do, call or email Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or [boba300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:boba300@dshs.wa.gov).

### Question / Answer Column

We often get questions from individuals that may be important to all caregivers. If you have a question, and think the answer would be information that would benefit other caregivers please contact Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or [boba300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:boba300@dshs.wa.gov) and we can post it in the newsletter.

**Question:** Are there any plans for Medicaid to pick up mental health care for children?

**Answer:** Medicaid does pay for mental health services. The child's medical ID card will pay for 12 visits to a medical professional outside of the Regional Support Network (RSN). Usually the 12 visits are used for medication management. All other mental health services are obtained by going through the RSNs and are also covered by Medicaid. Check with your social worker to determine how to contact the RSN in your area of the state.

## Foster Parent Training

All licensed family foster homes (including private agency, Children's Administration and licensed relative homes) are required to complete 36 hours of ongoing training during each three year licensing period. There are great trainings available to help you in the work you do. To find out what trainings are available go to the foster parent website at <http://www1.dsha.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>.

## Confidentiality of Parent Association Information

Children's Administration does not release your name or address to the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPWS), local foster parent associations, YMCA of Greater Seattle or to Families for Kids (FFK). These agencies can provide support, information and referral, and key information to assist you in providing for the children in your care. We encourage you to contact each of these agencies and provide them with your information so that they can add you to their email and mailing list and you can then receive important information. Contact information for these agencies is:

**Foster Parent Association of Washington State:** [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) or 1-800-391-CARE (2273)

**Families for Kids (FFK):** [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) or 1-888-794-1794

**YMCA of Greater Seattle:** [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) or 1-800-760-5340

**Foster Care Resource Network** (Bremerton and Tacoma caregivers): 1-253-677-8122.

## Important Numbers

**Important numbers to know when you take care of children in foster care or are thinking about doing so:**

Statewide information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent: *Why Foster* statewide telephone line at 1-800-760-5340 or [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Statewide information about receiving foster parent support: *Families for Kids*: 1-888-794-1784 or [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) Monday- Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message. Receive a return call by the next business day.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: *Foster Care Resource Network*, 1-253-677-8122. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: *Foster Parent Association of Washington State*, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day. Seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: *Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team* (FIRST) 1-253-219-6782, Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

CA Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis Line and general support on licensing and case management questions not abuse or neglect: *Caregiver Support/Crisis Line*: 1-800-301-1868. Weeknights from 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m./weekends and holidays, 24 hours per day.

*Family Help Line*: 1-800-932-HOPE or [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org). The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

For information about Foster Parenting: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For information about Foster Parent Training: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve:(r) <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>